



**NEWS RELEASE** OC xx-11

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **First of Two Potential Sites Approved for New Modesto Courthouse**

*First site selected; alternate site to follow*

SAN FRANCISCO—The State Public Works Board (SPWB) today approved one of two potential sites under consideration for a proposed new courthouse in Modesto for the Superior Court of Stanislaus County. The potential site totals approximately 3.5 acres, including the city block bounded by G and H Streets and 9th and 10th Streets in downtown Modesto. The site also includes a portion of the block bounded by H and I Streets and 9th and 10th Streets for parking. Portions of the 13-parcel site are owned by the City of Modesto; other parcels are privately owned. This site was chosen for its freeway access and proximity to the current courthouse and the downtown core.

“We are very pleased with the approval of the site by the Public Works Board, and with the progress we are making with the architects during the initial programming stages of the new courthouse,” said Ricardo Cordova, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Stanislaus County. “This continues to be a cooperative effort with the assistance of the Administrative Office of the Courts and court personnel. We are confident that the citizens of our community and the lawyers who practice here will have a brand-new and modern courthouse in a few years.”

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which is managing the project, expects to obtain SPWB approval on a second site early next year. The second potential site includes the city block bounded by H and I Streets and 13th and 14th Streets and a portion of the block across 14th Street for parking.

Approval of two potential sites is a standard part of the state’s site selection process for courthouse projects. SPWB approval allows the AOC to undertake further due diligence, an environmental assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act, and negotiations with sellers that will ultimately result in finalization of the site. Site selection and environmental review, as well as site acquisition, which also require SPWB approval, must be completed before architectural design of the new courthouse can begin. This project’s current schedule calls for completing site acquisition in mid-2012. Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-2014 and be completed approximately two years later, subject to change.

The new 26-courtroom courthouse is being planned as a full-service facility to replace seven court facilities—six in Modesto and an outlying courthouse in Ceres. Consolidating these facilities will enable the court to increase efficiency by retiring leases and centralizing operations. The project would improve security by providing enhanced entrance screening, separate hallways for the public, staff, and in-custody defendants, and properly sized holding areas for in-custody defendants.

(more)

This project was ranked as an “immediate need” in the judicial branch’s capital-outlay plan, making it among the branch’s highest-priority infrastructure projects. It is funded by Senate Bill 1407, which finances critically needed courthouse construction, renovation, and repair through a portion of judicial branch fees, penalties, and assessments, without impact on the state’s General Fund.

The state Budget Act for fiscal year 2011–2012 contains significant cuts to the account that funds SB 1407 projects. These cuts may cause delays in SB 1407 projects and project budget reductions but are not expected to delay this project’s progress in the current fiscal year.

More information about the project is available on the California Courts website at [www.courts.ca.gov/facilities-stanislaus.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/facilities-stanislaus.htm).

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